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Trial Asked for Officer Over Soviet Contacts

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 3 — The commanding officer of Second Lieut. Christopher M. Cooke, the Air Force officer accused of unauthorized contacts with the Soviet Embassy, has recommended a general court-martial, Air Force officers said today.

At the same time, the officers disclosed that jurisdiction over the case had been shifted within the Air Force from the Strategic Air Command to the Military Airlift Command in an effort to insure a fair trial for Lieutenant Cooke.

Senior officers in the command initiated and pursued the investigation, bringing charges from Lieutenant Cooke's attorney that they had abused their authority.

Meanwhile, the issue of immunity, which the officer's attorneys contend was promised him by Air Force investigators early in the inquiry, was still unresolved. The Air Force is to present its case against granting immunity before the Court of Military Appeals here by Thursday.

Lieutenant Cooke, who was the deputy commander of the crew of a Titan 2 intercontinental ballistic missile at Mc-

Connell Air Force Base near Wichita, Kan., has been accused of 13 unauthorized contacts with the Soviet Embassy from December 1980 to May 1981, when he was taken into custody by Air Force investigators.

Lieutenant Cooke and his attorneys, Capt. Francis W. Pedrotty of the Air Force and F. Lee Bailey, have maintained that their client was promised immunity from prosecution in return for full cooperation with the authorities.

The lawyers have asked the Court of Military Appeals to dismiss the case on the ground that he has cooperated with the investigators, including taking a lie detector test.

Officers involved in the early stages of the case had said the Air Force was most interested in determining the extent of any information Lieutenant Cooke might have passed to the Soviet Embassy so that security of the missiles could be restored.

But Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger and the commander of the Strategic Air Command, Gen. Richard Ellis, were both said to have been angered by Lieutenant Cooke's actions and to be determined that he be put on trial.

Lieutenant Cooke's commanding officer, Col. Charles Belt, signed the court-martial recommendation late last week, Air Force officers said. The recommendation did not specify the charges, which are left to the convening authority of the court, the officers said.

The Department of Justice, according to a spokesman there, is also continuing its investigation into possible violations of Federal espionage laws.

The Air Force, the officers said, has completed the equivalent of a grand jury proceeding against Lieutenant Cooke. It was from that proceeding that Colonel Belt drew his recommendation for a court-martial, the officers said. But legal officers in the Military Airlift Command must review that proceeding before deciding whether to accept the recommendation.

A spokesman for the Strategic Air Command, with headquarters in Omaha, said that his command had asked for a change of venue in an effort to avoid the appearance of unfair proceedings. He said that the Secretary of the Air Force, Verne Orr, had agreed and ordered the Military Airlift Command, with headquarters at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, to take jurisdiction.